

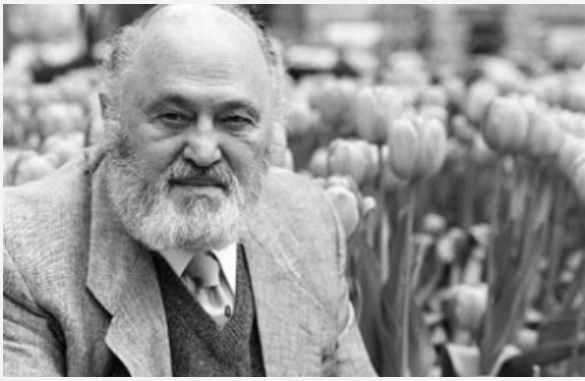
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## Let Freedom (of Sacred Folk Rock) Ring

Judaism has been interpreted throughout the millennia by rabbis, Talmudic scholars and leaders from across the Jewish spectrum. Many wanted to help people apply the teachings to the time and place in which they lived, bringing God closer to the people, so that the people could be brought closer to God. Some, like Cantor Raymond Smolover, may not have even realized they were setting off a sea change in the process.

In the 1960s, listening to his son's Bob Dylan records, Smolover heard what sounded to him like *davening*. Unlike the *davening* of traditional services, however, the younger generations were not only listening, they were

seeking it out. "I realized after almost twenty years of teaching [our children] the sound of my God, that I must listen to the sound of theirs," Smolover recalls. This revelation led to a musical revolution that began with the recordings featured in our newest release, [Volume 15: Digital Album 4—Edge of Freedom - Gates of Freedom](#), and has continued through the work of later artists including Debbie Friedman, Rick Recht, and Craig Taubman.



### Turn On



Learn more about the life and work of **Raymond Smolover** with our **exclusive Oral History interview**.

### Tune In



Listen to excerpts from Robert Strassburg and Raymond Smolover's opera, *Chelm*, in Volume 16: **Heroes and Heroines**.

### Drop Out



After 30 years of celebration, the **Bay Area Jewish Music Festival** will (sadly) sing its swansong.

The recordings of *Edge of Freedom* (a Sabbath eve service) and *Gates of Freedom* (a Sabbath morning Torah service) evoke a range of moods and emotions appropriate to a sacred service while using a musical language adapted from the popular music of the day. The works feature Smolover in the cantor role, accompanied by traditional rock band instruments, several acoustic instruments and a chorus drawn from the National Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY).

Smolover never meant to supplant the common musical style of American synagogue services with folk rock, but he saw that the times were "a-changing" and viewed it as a chance to reach a wider audience.